

The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. The national register is a program of the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. In Michigan, the State Historic Preservation Office, part of the Michigan Historical Center, administers the program. Michigan boasts over one thousand national register listings, including such diverse historic properties as houses, commercial and residential areas, farm and factory complexes, cemeteries and parks, monuments, ships and shipwreck sites.

The national register is more than a list of resources that have been researched and documented as significant to the nation, state or community. The register is a tool for preserving historic properties. Listed properties are given special consideration when the federal government is planning or giving aid to projects. Listing gives private citizens and public officials credibility when attempting to protect these resources. Listing in the national register, however, does not prevent a private citizen from altering, managing or disposing of the property.

Tax Benefits of National Register Designation

- A 20 percent federal Investment Tax Credit is available for the substantial rehabilitation of income-producing, certified historic buildings, which are buildings listed in the national register or located in a certified local historic district that meets national register criteria. To

obtain this credit, both the building and the rehabilitation must be certified.

- Federal gift tax, income and estate tax deductions authorized by the Federal Revenue Code are available for contribution of property “exclusively for conservation purposes,” which includes “the preservation of a historically important land area or certified historic structure.”

Criteria for Evaluation

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty years are not considered eligible for the national register. However, such

properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life; or
- A cemetery that derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or
- A property achieving significance within the past fifty years if it is of exceptional importance.

How to List a Property in the National Register

Michigan's State Historic Preservation Office submits all nominations of properties in Michigan—except federal properties—to the



national register. It is the responsibility of the applicants for national register designation to prepare the forms. Contact the State Historic Preservation Office for the forms and further information. Completed nominations are submitted to the State Historic Preservation Review Board, which is composed of professionals in the fields of American history, architectural history, cultural geography, prehistoric and historic archaeology, historic preservation and related disciplines. This review board makes a recommendation to the state historic preservation officer to accept or reject the property. If the review board believes the nominated property meets the criteria, the state historic preservation officer forwards the nomination to the National Park Service, which makes the final decision on the property's listing.

Affected property owners and local authorities are notified of the review board meeting and given an opportunity to comment on the nomination. If the owner of a private property, or the majority of such owners for a property or district with multiple owners, objects to the nomination, the state historic preservation officer forwards the nomination to

the National Park Service only for a determination about whether the property is eligible for listing. If a majority of owners does not object, the state historic preservation officer may approve the nomination and forward it to the National Park Service to be considered for listing. If the nomination is approved by the park service, the property is officially entered in the national register.

For Further Information

Contact the National Register Coordinator, State Historic Preservation Office, 717 West Allegan, Lansing, Michigan 48918-1800, 517/373-1630, or e-mail us at: preservation@state.mi.us. Visit our website at: www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve.

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PHOTO CREDITS

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